

Sanderson Farms Championship

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Country Club of Jackson

Hudson Swafford

Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: Hudson Swafford, thanks for joining us for a few minutes prior to your third start at the Sanderson Farms Championship. I know you've had a chance to get a little practice in this week and just some thoughts on the course and being back here this week at the Sanderson Farms Championship.

HUDSON SWAFFORD: This is a great golf course, great venue. I wish the fans were able to come out. This is a good family event with the locals around here. But excited to keep pushing through after last week's victory. I feel like my game is obviously in a pretty good place. The golf course is in great shape. The greens are fast as usual. The rough is up. This is the grass I grew up on, so very familiar with the lies and the golf course. So I'm looking forward to getting it started tomorrow.

DOUG MILNE: Taking you back to last week, obviously just a great week for you. If I saw it right, you were the only player in the entire field with four rounds in the 60s en route to your second career PGA TOUR win at Punta Cana. Just some thoughts on how special that was, how long overdue you felt like it was. What clicked for you last week?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Everything clicked, honestly. Just felt comfortable. The game has been good for a while, honestly, and haven't been getting a lot out of it. It's been frustrating. I really put in some good work during our time off during coronavirus, and really hadn't seen or got much out of it, and definitely been frustrating over the summer.

But just kind of stuck with it, knew that I've been seeing a lot of good play at home, a lot of good play even in practice rounds, and close but just getting in my own way, and I finally just kind of got out of my own way and played four rounds really solidly.

Q. I was reading in your transcript from your victory and you talked a lot about the importance of some mental work you did. Can you take me through that,



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give me a little more specifics?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Yeah, so I worked on and off with Brett McCabe, clinical sports psychologist and a good friend. I'd just been struggling kind of -- been getting in my own way, just kind of getting ahead of myself, and you can't do that in golf. Obviously easier said than done. But always kind of thinking maybe a shot or two ahead or a hole ahead, and just -- you can't do that. You've got to stay in the moment. Got to stay in the present. We've been working on that and kind of just focusing on that and a clear thought before I hit a golf shot. Bad thoughts are going to creep in your head, obviously, with anything that you do, but it's how you handle it and how you react to it is the big thing.

Everything has just kind of been eating at me a little bit different, obviously, being on the medical, having two starts left, and he's like, man, honestly, you keep doing this, you're not going to keep your card anyway, so you might as well just go have fun and enjoy playing golf again and try to just be like a junior golfer; just go have fun and you're just playing for a trophy. So we just kind of got back to just a little basics and just started having fun and started taking one shot at a time and trying to just clear my head completely.

It helped a lot last week.

Q. How much pressure did you feel trying to satisfy the medical?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Early on -- I mean, all summer after I restarted, I knew my game was good, and I was getting zero out of it. Then missed a couple cuts and I had like a 28th in there. I mean, yeah, there was a little pressure in there and I felt it kind of in Napa, a place that I've played well in the past, and I just was on edge all week. I played some good golf but I would -- I just kind of held myself back. It could have been a really good week there.

I had an off week and did some work with Brett, and he's like, man, you just can't -- we've got to get out of the medical, you're going to play golf the rest of your career.

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You've got a long career, two tournaments aren't going to define you. He's like, you're going to be playing on the PGA TOUR for a long time regardless. He goes, you're going to play other events this fall, you're going to play other events in the spring, so let's just go and have fun these last two events and get out of your own way because you know your golf is good.

We've just kind of -- he harped on that and I focused on that, and it was a fun week. I never really didn't -- I did think about my medical a little bit, but I knew I was in control of my golf game, so it was nice. It was fun. It was fun to get in the moment. Whether you win or not, I had -- where I wanted to be on the back nine on Sunday, right there in contention and playing well. It was fun to get the juices going again. Hadn't felt it in a long time, I guess since Phoenix. Yeah, it was nice. It was nice to cap it off.

Obviously lost the lead a little bit but still never really got ahead of myself, didn't really feel super uncomfortable, hit some great shots at 16 and 17 and a great putt on 18 and 17. It was fun to come through in that situation.

Q. Between the two highs of winning your first tournament and now your second, what was the low point?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Man, there was definitely some lows with golf. I mean, obviously I was injured for two years on and off, had a rib injury. Finally got back over the rib injury and played some good golf, finished third at Sony, was kind of over my injury and then my foot really started bothering me and couldn't really walk 72 holes. I had to have foot surgery so I missed another five months.

Yeah, it's been kind of a long road. I haven't played that much the last two years, especially after winning in '17, having a great year. I think I had four top 10s and just barely missed out on the Tour championship. It was tough. I mean, I had full status. I want to say I was right around 70th in the world and kind of going up and just, man, hit a wall.

There was definitely some lows in golf, and it was very unfortunate, but I'm better for that. But my personal life got better. Family life is way better. You know, to cherish this second win, to have my son see my win -- he was at home, but he got to see it on TV. It's something that I'll definitely cherish and kind of -- it kind of reboots my whole golf and revamps kind of what I've been doing, all the hard work, and just reiterates that I know I can compete out here and I belong here.

Q. Now what? What are the goals? How do you try to build on this?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Not get ahead of myself, keep doing what I did last week and just implement that into every round and every golf shot, not getting ahead of myself. I learned a lot about myself and kind of how I can get the best out of my game because I really thought that my game was really good. I was in control really all week, I think, and just how to take that forward and get into contention more.

Obviously you're not going to win every time you get in contention. I mean, if you did you're Tiger Woods basically. But I'm definitely looking forward to just getting back into contention as fast as possible and just seeing how I react and building on these past scenarios, and then getting into the majors and getting into contention, that's just kind of the next steps.

Q. Is your health 100 percent now, or do you still have some lingering issues?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Yeah, my foot still gets a little sore, but it doesn't hinder my golf. Yeah, I'm 100 percent healthy. Everything is good, knock on wood. Hopefully have no problems going forward. But yeah, body feels good. Everything has been great.

Q. How did you celebrate the victory?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Not big enough. I'll celebrate when I get home. I've still got Sanderson Farms and then I'm playing Vegas and Shriners next week. Definitely had a few beers with the guys Sunday night, which was fun. Didn't sleep very well, so I think I went to sleep about 7:45, 8:00 on Monday when I got into Jackson.

Q. What were your guys that were down there with you?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: I was with my caddie Kyle, some other caddies, a number of other -- Benji Thompson, Chris Callas, and a number of other guys -- Bryce Garnett, Scott Brown and a few other guys. Actually Benji had gone, they went deep sea fishing early Sunday morning, caught a bunch of mahi, so the resort cooked up some mahi and we had one or two or 12 beers, no one was really counting, but we had a great time, and then my wife was in the middle of maybe 15 guys. I felt bad for her, but at the same time, she was enjoying it and having a good time, having a good laugh.

It was nice. It wasn't too late of a night. But like I said, I'll probably just wait until I get home to maybe have a real celebration.



Q. Given what you went through, was the second victory more meaningful than the first?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: No. The first one, man, it's just hard to win on TOUR, so the first one -- your first one is your most special, I think. I definitely didn't want to be that guy who was like -- that just had one PGA TOUR win. I'm not saying you get lucky and just win once, but I want to win multiple times. That's why I get up and grind and do what I do and put as much effort into it. I feel like my game -- I feel like I can win on the TOUR in numerous places, numerous golf courses.

I was looking for that second win, and now obviously I'm just looking to get in contention as fast as possible and look for a third win. If you're content with where you're at in golf, you're never going to go forward. I'm just looking forward to competing this week in Jackson, Sanderson Farms, a golf course that I really like, so just try to get back into contention as fast as possible.

DOUG MILNE: The one question I wanted to follow up you kind of answered is would you say it's harder to win for the first time on the PGA TOUR or is the second win hardest?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Ooh, man, probably the second. Probably the second. They're all hard, honestly. Some people make it look real easy, but they're all hard. They don't give away victories on TOUR. But yeah, that second win was hard to come by, especially kind of the way I took a couple steps back in my golf career and just the uncertainty of -- when I was going to get back into winning form.

I've seen a lot of good golf over the last couple years like in spurts, but really since COVID I've really seen a lot of good golf. Maybe not the results that I've wanted on the PGA TOUR, but I've seen a lot of good golf and knew I was going to have a chance to win coming up and just pull on past memories of winning and taking advantage of your opportunity.

Q. I just wanted to ask you what's your favorite part about the course here at Jackson?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: Man, the greens are unbelievable here. And the fans, honestly. It's a shame that they're not being able to partake. I like it. This place doesn't get overly crowded but it's a great like family atmosphere, like I said earlier, with the neighborhood and the surrounding community. A lot of interactions with the players and the fans. It's not going to be quite the same this year, unfortunately.

This is always a good week. I think it's not a super

stressful week with a ton of fans yelling at you, but it's just a great chill week. I really enjoy it here. Good food, good people and a great golf course.

Q. Just wanted to find out what you thought of the experience of playing in the pro-am today.

HUDSON SWAFFORD: I actually was not in the pro-am today. From last year's FedExCup, I only played 10 events, I finished 153 or 154, I believe, so I wasn't in the pro-am. I had a little practice day, get a little workout in, and I'll get to go lay and relax.

Q. Where do you recommend for eats when you're here?

HUDSON SWAFFORD: I with enter to Tico's Steakhouse, a local place here last night. It was unbelievable. And then Drago's oysters, obviously. Incredible. Incredible oysters, hard to beat. Lucas took me to a place a couple years ago, Char, which was amazing, and it's right close to my hotel. So I'll probably hit that up this week. No, there's a lot of good eats in Jackson.

DOUG MILNE: Hudson, with that we will let you know. We certainly wish you the best of luck this week and we appreciate your time as always.

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